

# Neighborhood Networks

## *How to Design and Deliver an Effective Employment Program*

February 2002



U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development  
Office of Multifamily Housing

[www.NeighborhoodNetworks.org](http://www.NeighborhoodNetworks.org)  
(888) 312-2743

# **How to Design and Deliver an Effective Employment Program**

This publication was developed by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to assist in the planning and development of Neighborhood Networks centers.

The guides in this series offer “how to” information on starting a center, creating programs and identifying center partners, marketing and media outreach, sustainability, funding and much more.

These newly updated guides feature new contacts, resources, case studies and helpful information.

Neighborhood Networks is a community-based program established by HUD in 1995. Since then, hundreds of centers have opened throughout the United States and Puerto Rico. These community technology centers provide residents of HUD insured and assisted properties with programs, activities and training promoting economic self-sufficiency.

This guide was published in 2002.

To receive copies of this publication or any others in the series, contact:

U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development  
Neighborhood Networks  
2277 Research Boulevard, 5J  
Rockville, MD 20850

Neighborhood Networks Information Center  
Toll-free (888) 312-2743  
E-mail: [mail@NeighborhoodNetworks.org](mailto:mail@NeighborhoodNetworks.org)  
TTY: (800) 483-2209

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# ***Table of Contents***

<b>Introduction .....</b>	<b>1</b>
Purpose of This Guide.....	1
How to Use the Guide .....	1
<b>What Is an Employment Program? .....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Factors That Contribute to Success .....</b>	<b>2</b>
Highlights of Job Training Research.....	2
<b>Linking Successful Components to Neighborhood Networks Centers .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Neighborhood Networks Center Examples .....</b>	<b>3</b>
Case 1: Northport/Packer Community Learning Centers, Madison, Wisconsin: A Holistic Employment Education Program .....	4
Background .....	4
Case 2: The Interstate Realty Management Company (IRM), Marlton, New Jersey .....	9
<b>Elements of Success.....</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Resources .....</b>	<b>11</b>
Contact Information for Neighborhood Networks Center Case Studies.....	11
Organizations, Publications, and Web Sites .....	11
<b>Endnotes.....</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Neighborhood Networks Information.....</b>	<b>15</b>

# ***How to Design and Deliver an Effective Employment Program***

## **Introduction**

In 1995, the U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) launched the Neighborhood Networks program to respond to the economic and educational needs of residents living in HUD-assisted and HUD-insured properties. Neighborhood Networks seeks to engage multifamily property owners nationwide in expanding residents' access to technology and helping them move from welfare to work and from dependency to self-sufficiency.

Today, more than 1,000 Neighborhood Networks centers have been established nationwide. They are attracting participation from residents and community members, partnering with local and national groups, and fostering resident movement into the worlds of education and work.

Employment programs, which are an integral part of the Neighborhood Networks concept, vary from center to center and may include General Equivalency Degree (GED) preparation and English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) classes, soft skills and job skills training, and job-placement services. Employment programs can enhance a resident's job readiness or assist residents in finding and retaining employment.

## **Purpose of This Guide**

This guide provides Neighborhood Networks center staff with the tools to design and implement an effective employment program. It includes two case studies to illustrate successful employment programs at Neighborhood Networks centers. The employment programs at these centers incorporate many of the practices that other studies have found effective.

The case studies provide an in-depth look at the development and implementation of each program and include lessons learned, obstacles overcome, critical elements for success, and opportunities for replication. By learning what has worked for centers in other communities, center staff can more effectively address the employment needs of residents in their own communities.

## **How to Use the Guide**

The successful practices described in the following chapters are useful in helping centers that are currently operating employment programs improve their services. In addition, they act as a program development model for centers that are expanding current services or creating new service options. They also are useful as an evaluation resource for centers partnering or contracting with service providers.

While many features of the case studies can be applied across different sites, there is no substitute for designing a program that directly responds to the needs of local residents and employers. As such, centers planning to create their own employment programs should begin by assessing those needs. Center staff can then select elements from these case studies that best address their centers' individual circumstances and then tailor their program to meet the needs of their communities.

By learning about practices that have been successful at other centers and under similar circumstances, center staff will be in a better position to design an effective program.

To facilitate information sharing among centers, the resource section includes contact information for each center featured in the case studies. To build on these successes, all Neighborhood Networks centers are encouraged to share their own "Lessons Learned" by

e-mailing updates to their center profiles at [mail@neighborhoodnetworks.org](mailto:mail@neighborhoodnetworks.org) or by calling the Neighborhood Networks Information Center toll-free at (888) 312-2743.

## What Is an Employment Program?

Employment programs provide a range of services to improve the employment opportunities of participants. The following services may be included in an employment program:

- **Basic education.** Adult education, including high school equivalency (GED) preparation, basic reading, writing, math, and English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) instruction.
- **Job readiness.** Life-skills training, such as time management, conflict resolution, problem solving, professional dress and demeanor, and communication skills.
- **Job-skills training.** Customized training for employer partners, computer training (keyboarding, introduction to computers and advanced computer training) and other skills training for specific types of jobs.
- **Job search.** Training in traditional job search methods (newspapers, trade journals and job banks), resume writing, and interviewing skills. May also include an employment needs assessment and career planning.
- **Job development and placement.** Involves establishing partnerships with employers and job training organizations, and conducting job fairs, mock interviews, and field trips to educational and employment organizations.
- **Job retention services.** Services for residents to maintain employment, which may include one-on-one job counseling, support groups, career planning, and support

services, such as childcare and transportation assistance.

## Factors That Contribute to Success

### Highlights of Job Training Research

What makes an effective employment program? For a program to be considered effective, it must help participants achieve higher earnings and employment retention. Job-training programs that attain such outcomes typically share the following common characteristics:

- **Mixed strategy approach.** Programs that combine job search, education, job training, and work in their design have had a greater impact on participants' incomes and long-term job retention than programs that exclusively focus on either job search or basic education.<sup>1</sup>
- **Employment focus.** Programs that focus on employment by developing strong ties with local employers, understanding the local labor market, and designing training to meet employer requirements for specific jobs have been proven to be effective. Training for a specific job also motivates students.<sup>2</sup>
- **Integration of work and learning.** Programs that integrate work and learning by teaching basic education as part of job-skills training have been more effective in improving skills and earnings.<sup>3</sup>
- **Better jobs.** Few welfare-to-work programs have helped recipients increase their earnings by helping them find better jobs. Programs that have focused on this goal and found better jobs for their participants have done so by preparing participants for specific occupations.<sup>4</sup>
- **Barriers to training and employment.** Programs that address childcare, transportation, or other needs of individuals and their families enable jobseekers to

participate more effectively in training and finding jobs.<sup>5</sup>

- **Case management services.** Programs that provide case management services during the program and after placement services, and those that foster long-term personal relationships between staff and program participants increase the likelihood of success.<sup>6</sup>

#### Welfare Reform

Before developing a job-training curriculum, a Neighborhood Networks center should research the welfare-to-work requirements in the state in which it is located to ensure that its program will comply with these requirements. Under the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 (PRWORA), an adult receiving welfare assistance for 24 months must participate in a “work activity.” However, the federal legislation leaves it up to each state to define what constitutes a “work activity.” Before developing their programs, centers should contact local and state offices to learn more about the following:

- State welfare requirements.
- Employment and training rules.
- Vocational/educational rules.

## Linking Successful Components to Neighborhood Networks Centers

To prepare this handbook, Neighborhood Networks center staffs were interviewed extensively about their employment programs. The following criteria were used to select the centers:

- Level of resident involvement.
- Amount of employer participation.
- Length of time in operation (minimum 1 year).
- Range of employment and support services offered.
- Focus of program goals on job placement and skills development.

- Level of partnership development (extensive ties to community organizations and employers).
- Established performance measures.
- Potential for transferability.

This handbook highlights the employment programs of two Neighborhood Networks centers, Northport/Packer (NPP) Community Learning Centers in Madison, Wisconsin, and The Interstate Realty Management Company (IRM) in Marlton, New Jersey.

Both NPP and IRM have developed strong partnerships with area employers and have involved residents in the planning and operation of the centers. Both customize their instruction to respond to individual needs and skill levels. Both provide a wide range of employment and support services including helping residents identify and remove barriers and preventing them from obtaining and retaining employment. While both programs recognize the importance of finding jobs for residents, they also recognize the need for residents to develop job skills and improve their earning potential.

These case studies provide only two examples of successful Neighborhood Networks programs. Centers across the country are experiencing success in a host of other employment and training activities.

## Neighborhood Networks Center Examples

The case studies presented in this handbook provide in-depth descriptions of the employment programs of each center. Each case study is divided into the following sections:

- Background.
- Program Description.
- Employer Partnerships.
- Program Design and Development.
- Staffing.
- Outcomes.

- Lessons Learned.
- Transferability.

### **Case 1: Northport/Packer Community Learning Centers, Madison, Wisconsin: A Holistic Employment Education Program**

*Northport Apartments and Packer Townhouses are two adjacent developments managed jointly by the American Baptist Churches of Wisconsin. Approximately 650 residents live in the 280 units, with many households headed by single women.*

*Since 1994, the Northport/Packer (NPP) Community Learning Centers have offered a wide range of programs for their residents including childcare, Head Start, after-school tutoring, community meals, recreational activities, adult education, and employment assistance. The community learning centers located in each development are run jointly.*

#### **Background**

In early efforts to provide employment services for the resident population, NPP Community Learning Centers staff referred residents to the Dane County Job Center, which primarily serves individuals who are job-ready but temporarily unemployed. NPP quickly discovered that only 10 percent of its residents completed Dane County's job-training program. The county's services were not set up to train people who lack formal education, skills, or work experience. Residents were unable to meet the county's standards and were not qualified for the available jobs.

Adults who participate in the Community Learning Centers' employment-training program often have been on public assistance for several years and have never held a job. NPP Community Learning Centers staff identified a problem involving the high number of jobs available in office/administrative/data entry fields and the lack of a structured and effective method for placing unemployed residents in those positions.

NPP Community Learning Centers created the Career Connections program to address this gap. Career Connections was funded through a Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) to the city of Madison. In addition to adult basic education and job training, Career Connections provided services such as childcare, job-readiness training, and transportation assistance to help participants overcome barriers to finding and keeping a job.

When the city decided after several years not to continue funding Career Connections, NPP Community Learning Centers turned to the Wisconsin Technical College Board System for funding for its employment, adult education, and literacy program, which now serves as the basis of the employment-training program.

Since this change, the centers have been able to increase the number of people being prepared for long-term employment. With the active involvement of the Madison Area Technical College and the Wisconsin Technical College Board System, participants are served in a holistic manner, with courses ranging from GED preparation, English as a Second Language (ESL), and adult basic education to computer skills development on high-end software. This program not only allows housing residents to market themselves more successfully, but also has expanded to serve the education and employment-training needs of nonresidents from the surrounding community.

#### **Program Description**

After 8 years of development, the NPP Community Learning Centers have matured into a community institution. The model has been expanded to include services for preschool and childcare, after-school programming, adult education, and education and employment counseling that involve both individuals and families. Employment training now starts with K-12 education programs to ensure that the centers' young people will be prepared for careers and higher education.



***Assessment of residents' needs and skills.***

When a resident first contacts the NPP Community Learning Centers' employment-training program, a staff member conducts an assessment of the resident's education level, previous work experience, and interests and ambitions. The staff member then completes an assessment form detailing whether the resident needs basic education, job training, or both. Together, the staff member and resident determine employment and education goals that are incorporated into the Resident Development Plan required for all NPP residents. For the resident who needs basic education, such as reading, writing, or ESL instruction, the center offers onsite classes conducted several times a week by the Madison Area Technical College (MATC). The NPP Community Learning Centers partner with MATC to provide these courses and work closely with the MATC instructors to determine when each resident is ready for job training. The NPP employment-training staff believes that MATC's onsite presence is a tremendous asset to the program because residents are able to take advantage of onsite childcare services and attend classes without having to arrange for transportation.

**Career Connections  
Program Profile**

**Program capacity:** 51 residents

**Hardware:** 60 computers at 2 sites, printers, a digital camera, a laptop computer, and a portable printer.

**Software:** Microsoft Office, Internet, Adobe PhotoShop, Adobe PageMaker, FileMaker Pro, several spreadsheet programs, and other professional employment, training, and educational software.

***Job training.*** When residents are ready for job training, Community Learning Centers staff members work with them to find the best match between their interests and the Madison job market. The employment-training program does not prescribe one specific employment path for all residents, but instead tries to tailor the residents' ambitions and interests to feasible career paths. Residents work with NPP

Community Learning Centers staff to develop their class and job-counseling schedules. The employment-training program can adapt class schedules to the needs of the individual resident because residents learn independently using computer-based learning. The training lasts no fixed length of time: residents take classes until they are ready to look for a job. This approach provides the employment-training program with a legitimacy and "buy-in" among residents who do not feel as though they are being pushed through the system.

***Placement.*** When residents are ready to look for jobs, the staff works with them to find specific placements with employer partners. Throughout the job-training process, residents are counseled in interview and job-search skills. The staff arranges interviews with employers who have openings that match the residents' skills and interests. Once a position is identified, staff members orient the resident to the employer's organizational culture, such as dress code, work hours, lunch hour practices, work styles, and behavior, and communicate the employer's expectations for performance.

The NPP Community Learning Centers' employment-training program requires its partner employers to include a skills assessment during interviews so that residents are not judged solely on their physical appearance or social conduct. Residents can borrow a laptop computer and portable printer for use during job interviews. In one interview, a resident asked the employer to give him a task to perform to demonstrate his skills; the employer suggested designing a marketing flyer. The resident used familiar graphics software on the laptop to create a design.

Prior to placement, a Community Learning Centers staff member accompanies the resident to a meeting with his/her new supervisor to establish a relationship and to have a chance to ask and answer any remaining questions. Employers have generally preferred to conduct individual or group meetings at the centers rather than at employment sites. During the first 6 months on the job, program staff intensively monitors the resident's progress with both the

resident and employer. When a resident employee is not doing well, the centers' employment-training program staff can provide additional training and counseling to address the problem; on occasion they may pull the resident out of the position temporarily.

### **Employer Partnerships**

The NPP Community Learning Centers' employment-training program looks for employers who are committed to hiring a significant number of NPP residents and are willing to work with the program to make the residents' employment a success. Partner employers must commit to hiring residents on a trial basis if program staff deems them to be employment-ready. The employment-training program has developed partnerships with a number of employers, including two insurance firms, a meatpacking plant, a national merchandising company, a retailer, the Internal Revenue Service, the local school district, and the University of Wisconsin. Residents have been placed in positions as data entry technicians, graphic designers, marketing agents, and insurance claim adjusters.

***Living wage assessment.*** As a first step in its employer partnership development effort, the NPP Community Learning Centers employment-training program conducted a living wage assessment in the Madison area. By researching the cost of rent, taxes, food, utilities, and other expenses, the program staff determined that a person must earn an hourly wage of at least \$8.10 plus benefits and insurance to afford all basic living expenses. The NPP Community Learning Centers' employment-training program will not partner with employers who cannot offer this minimum salary.

***Organizational assessment.*** A critical component of the program's relationship with employers is its organizational assessment process. NPP program staff believes that one of the greatest reasons for job failure is that employees are not mentored in the employer's organizational culture. When an employer expresses interest in partnering with the NPP Community Learning Centers' employment-

training program, a program staff member visits the employer to assess the organization. The staff member looks at how employees are treated, the work culture, and the level of retention within the organization. The employment-training program uses this information to qualify partners and brief residents during the training period. Employers also benefit since residents who have been familiarized with an employer's culture will have a greater chance for success and retention, thus saving recruitment and training costs.

***Partnership development.*** Employer recruitment requires a great deal of time and effort. Program staff have found that for every five employers contacted, only one may be interested in discussing the idea of hiring NPP residents. The employment-training program is constantly identifying available jobs and potential employers. Volunteers scan want ads and online job services such as JobNet, then contact employers to find out more about the positions, request sample tasks and work products, and describe how the program works. The staff member explains to potential employers that hiring NPP residents is a smart business decision, not charity. By hiring NPP residents, an employer saves time and money in looking for employees and is guaranteed that new employees will have been trained in its procedures and culture.

The NPP Community Learning Centers' employment-training program also maintains constant informal involvement and meetings with employers who can visit the center and describe their companies and the kinds of jobs available. The open houses have helped break down cultural barriers between employers and residents. The NPP Centers also work with the county job center, which sends employers to the NPP Community Learning Centers for presentations. On a monthly basis, the NPP program convenes an informal board of human resource professionals representing employers in Madison for informal discussions about job leads and contacts. The NPP staff values the chance to work with partners both formally and informally to increase its community network.

## Program Design and Development

It took just over 2 years for NPP staff to plan the Career Connections program, obtain resources for the center, and build the partnerships with MATC and the Dane County Job Center.

### Sample of Survey Questions

- What goals do you have for yourself and your children?
- What kinds of services do you need?
- What will you do with these services?

Residents worked with the director of NPP Community Learning Centers and American Baptist Homes to design the Northport and Packer program. When the director distributed a survey to residents to find out what kinds of services they wanted in the Career Connections program, less than 6 percent responded. He then decided to interview people in person.

According to the director, finding out exactly what residents wanted and needed was critical to the program's success. Residents are interested and committed to the program because it provides them with services they need, such as childcare and employment-focused training. The NNP centers' director says the employment program has now been "institutionalized" by its inclusion in the Wisconsin Technical College Board System budget, which requires renewal on a 3-year funding cycle. The NNP Community Learning Centers have trained their staff in grant writing so that they can apply to foundations for additional funding.

## Staff

The NPP properties use residents to meet their staffing needs. Residents work for the childcare center, the Head Start Program, and the property maintenance and management offices. The employment-training program also is staffed primarily by residents, who work with six part-time technical college staff for adult education programs. Working with some outside specialists is also a benefit, the centers' director

points out, because "our people feel like part of a larger professional staff." Despite the limited work experience of the three full-time staff members, there has been no turnover in full-time positions and less than 2 percent turnover overall since the program began.

The positions available at the employment-training program offer full benefits, including sick leave, vacation, health insurance, and a retirement plan. Initially, when the Career Connections program began, the city of Madison was hesitant about using its CDBG funds on a program with such a flexible structure that hired unemployed residents. However, NPP persuaded the city that funding the program would be an effective use of funds.

### NPP Training Program Staff

**Job developer**—contacts potential employers and conducts assessments of potential partners.

**Program operator**—conducts resident needs assessments, designs resident training, and oversees computer-based training.

**Program administrator**—provides secretarial support for the Program.

**Community Learning Center director**—provides guidance and oversight to the Career Connections staff.

## Outcomes

Before NPP launched its Career Connections program, 60 percent of its adult residents depended on public assistance. In the first 2 years of program operation that percentage declined significantly, to 28 percent. More than 120 residents have found jobs after completing the employment-training program. A number of residents have left the NPP apartments and bought their own homes. Residents have found jobs with hourly wages ranging from \$7.50 to \$16.50 that include healthcare and benefits. From monitoring resident progress for 6 months, staff members have learned that out of 70 placements in 2 years, only 1 person left a job during the first 6 months.

Partner employers have been pleased with the program. In fact, many partners feel that the program demands too much of the residents and imposes higher standards than the employers do. Some employers have said they would like to send nonresident employees with performance problems to the NPP employment-training program for computer skills training. The centers do not charge nonresidents for services, but rather ask them to consider how they can contribute to the program, for example, by volunteering or making in-kind donations.

**NPP Employment Training Program:  
Key Steps to Developing a Successful Job  
Training Program**

- Find out what residents want from a job-training program, and involve them in designing and implementing the program.
- Research what a living wage is for your community.
- Establish criteria *for* and conduct an assessment *of* potential employer partners.
- Develop partnerships with employers and involve them in the design of the training program to ensure that it addresses their staffing needs.
- Conduct an assessment of each resident's educational level, previous work experience, interests, and ambitions.
- Design a flexible program that can be tailored to meet the individual needs of the participants.
- Address barriers to training and employment, such as lack of childcare and transportation.
- Develop partnerships with colleges and other service providers.
- Involve residents in staffing and marketing the program.
- Monitor a resident's progress for 6 months after job placement.
- Develop a system for tracking outcomes.

## **Lessons Learned**

Neighborhood Networks centers developing job-training programs should:

- Involve residents in the ongoing design process and operation of the center.
- Find out what the residents' dreams and ambitions are, and then try to match residents with jobs that best suit their interests.
- Be informal, flexible, and willing to change the design if an element of the program is not working.
- During the startup phase, focus energy on creating a high-quality program rather than getting quantifiable results. Demand a high level of commitment and quality of both the staff and the residents.
- Continue to work with residents after they are employed. Problems often arise after the first few months of employment. At that point, residents could get discouraged and possibly leave their jobs without the support of the employer and the Neighborhood Networks center.

## **Transferability**

The owners of the Northport Apartments and Packer Townhouses are building a 23,000-square-foot facility in Milwaukee and are applying many of the same principles used at NPP. The owners recognize, however, that each community is different and that they cannot simply replicate the NPP Community Learning Centers' employment-training program model and expect it to succeed. Therefore, the owners, management, and residents are working together to find other ways to develop the employment, training, and placement component.

## **Case 2: The Interstate Realty Management Company (IRM), Marlton, New Jersey**

### **Background**

The Interstate Realty Management Company (IRM) is an innovative development, financing, and property management service that operates 25 Neighborhood Networks Centers at 188 affordable housing properties in 17 states, the Virgin Islands, Puerto Rico, and the District of Columbia.

### **Program Description**

IRM's Neighborhood Networks centers offer a broad-based curriculum that includes job readiness, life skills, basic computer literacy, data entry, Microsoft Office 2000, adult basic education, GED training, and life-skills training. The company employs social services coordinators who carry out a variety of supportive services, such as educational enrichment programs, technical assistance to groups operating at the center, recreational activities, and life-skills training programs.

### **Life-Skills Training**

IRM's life-skills training program provides hands-on training in resume writing, completing employment applications, how to interview for a job, and life and career planning. In addition, the training covers topics such as conflict resolution skills, punctuality and attendance, dressing for success, and having a positive attitude in the workplace. Several centers also have onsite employment clothing banks. These clothing banks employ center residents and instruct them in the job skills needed for retail positions.

### **Program Staff**

Jackie Jones, VP Social Programs; Mario Lzano, Program Coordinator.

### **Program Design and Development**

In 1996, IRM implemented a social services program. It hired social services coordinators to help individuals acquire the skills needed to become employable. These coordinators work closely with resident groups and provide leadership training. IRM recruits trainers with backgrounds in human services; they believe it is easier to help them acquire the technical knowledge needed to instruct in the use of computers than to help computer experts learn how to assist people lacking fundamental skills. The underlying challenge in the program is to help individuals identify achievable goals to prevent frustration as they participate in the program.

### **Program Funding**

The company's owner created the Interstate Realty Management Company Educational Foundation. This Foundation matches donations from business associates dollar-for-dollar to provide scholarships that support the higher education efforts of worthy residents.

### **Employer Partnerships**

A unique aspect of IRM's program is that it forms partnerships with various businesses and tailors its training to the specific, actual requirements of these businesses. Therefore, center residents learn the tasks that will be expected of them when they are employed. For example, in Atlantic City, seven centers formed partnerships with the Trump Casino; job training is done on Neighborhood Networks hardware using the Trump Casino software. In addition, the program provides job preparation training, such as how to interview for a job and how to write resumes.

### **Outcomes**

Since launching its 13-week job-training course in 1996, IRM has placed more than 600 residents in gainful employment.

## Elements of Success

This handbook highlights two Neighborhood Networks centers with employment programs that effectively meet the needs of residents and employers in the communities they serve. The programs incorporate many of the programmatic features that employment and training research have found to be effective. Some of the key elements of the success of these programs include:

- **Resident-driven program.** Find out what residents want from an employment program and involve them in the design, implementation and operation of center programs. Also include residents in the staffing and marketing of the program.
- **Employer involvement.** Programs that focus on employment by developing strong ties with local employers, understanding the local labor market and designing training to meet employer requirements for specific jobs have been proven to be effective. Training for a specific job also motivates students. By involving employers in the design and implementation of the employment programs, centers are able to better assess employer needs and tailor their programs to meet those needs.

### Tips for Developing Close Industry Ties

- Establish industry councils for particular occupations.
- Recruit instructors who are well connected to their respective industries (speak with companies' human resource managers).
- Promote employer "ownership" of the training program.
- Organize industry participation in a broad range of program development activities.

Source: Edwin Melendez, *Working on Jobs: Center for Employment and Training* (Boston, MA: The Mauricio Gaston Institute, 1996).

- **Employer assessment.** In addition to assessing employer needs, centers should also establish standards for and conduct an assessment of potential employer partners. Assess how employees are treated, the work culture and the level of retention within the organization. Use this information to qualify partners and brief residents during the training period. Employers also will benefit from this assessment since residents who have been familiarized with the employer's culture will have a greater chance for success and retention, and thus save recruitment and training costs.
- **Individualized training and career guidance.** Conduct an assessment of each resident's educational level, previous work experience, interests and ambitions. Offer a variety of programs and a wide range of services to meet the needs of all participants including those with below average skills and those working to become self-sufficient. Then find the best match between a participant's interests and the job market in your community. Try to tailor the participant's ambitions and interests to feasible career paths.
- **Case management.** Provide comprehensive support services that identify and remove barriers to employment, such as lack of childcare or transportation. Develop an ongoing support group to help employed residents deal with on-the-job issues. Make support services available to residents after they have completed the program. Programs that provide case management services during the program and after placement and foster long-term personal relationships between staff and program participants increase the likelihood of success.

- **Follow-up services.** Provide follow-up services for at least six months after placement to help residents maintain employment. Track the progress of graduates after they leave the program to help them address any needs while they are on the job. When appropriate, provide additional training and counseling to address problems that may arise and pull the resident out of the position temporarily, if necessary.
- **Living wage.** Research what a living wage is for your community. Programs that have focused on increasing participants' earnings by helping them find better jobs have done so by preparing participants for specific occupations.
- **Mixed strategy approach.** Programs that combine job search, education, job training and work in their design have had a greater impact on participants' incomes and long-term job retention than programs that exclusively focus on either job search or basic education.
- **Partnerships with community-based organizations.** Partnership building, while time consuming, plays a key role in the development of a center's employment programs. Maintain extensive partnerships with employers, community service providers, local government agencies and community-based organizations to obtain access to funding and other critical resources.
- **Performance measures.** Develop a system for tracking outcomes, such as placements, job retention and data on wages and wage increases. Being able to show measurable outcomes plays a key role in obtaining funding for employment programs.

## Resources

### Contact Information for Neighborhood Networks Center Case Studies

#### Northport/Packer Community Technology Centers

Contact: Carmen Porco, Director  
Northport Apartments Corporation  
1927 Northport Drive  
Madison, WI 53704  
(608) 255-2759  
E-mail: cporco@mailbag.com

#### Interstate Realty Management Company

Contact: Ms. Jacqueline Jones, Vice President-Social Services  
1 East Stow Road  
P.O. Box 994  
Marlton, NJ 08053-0994  
Phone: (856) 596-0500, ext. 2815  
E-mail: jjones@irmmgmt.com  
[www.irmmgmt.com](http://www.irmmgmt.com)

### Organizations, Publications, and Web Sites

#### Neighborhood Networks

[www.NeighborhoodNetworks.org](http://www.NeighborhoodNetworks.org)  
Includes links to Web sites with job training resources.

#### Packer Community Learning Center

[www.packers.org](http://www.packers.org)

#### The Interstate Realty Management Company

[www.irmmgmt.com](http://www.irmmgmt.com)

#### Employment and Training Administration (ETA), U.S. Department of Labor (DOL)

<http://www.doleta.gov>

This is the Internet homepage of the Employment and Training Administration's (ETA's) welfare-to-work division. The "Highlights" section contains very current

information, especially on the welfare-to-work competitive grants. Key links are provided for individuals, employers, and the welfare-to-work community. Connections are offered for material on legislation, regulations, regional contacts, other Web sites, news clippings, and fact sheets. The archive has records of state planning guides, funding allocations, and grant information. This site is the place to start for locating information on federal government programs in welfare to work. Contact information for each ETA program can be obtained at this Web site.

**National Alliance of Business (NAB)**

Contact: (800) 787-2848 or [info@nab.com](mailto:info@nab.com)

The National Alliance of Business (NAB) manages both a welfare-to-work program and a school-to-work program. Under both programs, NAB provides training and technical assistance to educational institutions, businesses, and intermediary organizations (e.g. job-training nonprofits) to improve the quality and effectiveness of welfare-to-work and school-to-work efforts. Neighborhood Networks center staff can take advantage of NAB training and technical assistance services to improve their effectiveness as job training and placement professionals. Participation may improve their ability to help center clients find employment.

**The Welfare-to-Work Partnership**

Contact: (888) USA-JOBS1

[info@welfaretowork.org](mailto:info@welfaretowork.org)

[www.welfaretowork.org](http://www.welfaretowork.org)

The partnership was founded by the business community to help businesses reach the new workforce of public assistance recipients. The

partnership actively recruits companies as “Business Partners.” Neighborhood Networks center staff can help clients find employment with welfare-to-work partner businesses in their community. The Web site has two sections that provide information relevant to all stakeholders involved in the welfare-to-work initiative.

“Blueprints for Hiring” is an employer-focused report that describes the many advantages and employer incentives for hiring from this new workforce, including tax credits and wage subsidies. “Working Examples” profiles over 80 employers of various sizes that are successfully hiring former welfare recipients. Other sections feature facts and statistics, other links, events, and news to use.

**Job Link**

Contact: Bill McMahon

(612) 529-4373

[bill@joblink.org](mailto:bill@joblink.org)

HIRED provides community-based job training and placement services in the Minneapolis-St. Paul region. It accomplishes its work through Job Link, a computer-based job development system that links employers, job development organizations and jobseekers through a large database of available job openings submitted by the participating employers themselves. Other HIRED services include technical assistance, employment counselor training, and custom employment network development.

Neighborhood Networks centers might consider developing a job search program based on the Job Link model.



## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup>Julie Strawn, *Beyond Job Search or Basic Education: Rethinking the Role of Skills in Welfare Reform* (Washington, DC: Center for Law and Social Policy, 1998).

<sup>2</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup>Jobs for the Future, Mt. Auburn Associates, Inc., Nancy Nye, Brandon Roberts & Associates and Richard Schramm, *Federal Jobs Policy: History, Current Status, and Future Challenges* (Boston, MA: Jobs for the Future, 1997).

<sup>4</sup>Strawn, 1998.

<sup>5</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>6</sup>Jobs for the Future, 1997.

# ***Neighborhood Networks Information***

For more information about Neighborhood Networks, visit the Neighborhood Networks Web site at [www.NeighborhoodNetworks.org](http://www.NeighborhoodNetworks.org), or contact the Neighborhood Networks information center toll-free at (888) 312-2743, or TTY at (800) 483-2209. The Web site contains valuable information for centers including:

## **HUD NN Coordinators**

Neighborhood Networks Coordinators listing.

## **Center Database**

Information about operational centers and those in planning. Neighborhood Networks Centers across the U.S. listed geographically by state.

## **Property Database**

Information about Neighborhood Networks Properties listed geographically by state.

## **Resources Database**

Information about funding, technical assistance, publications, and Web site resources.

## **News Database**

Articles, press releases, success stories, and grand openings relevant to Neighborhood Networks.

## **List of Conferences**

Training Calendar of Conferences and Training Events.

## **List of Resident Associations**

Listing of Neighborhood Networks Properties with active Resident Associations.

## **Neighborhood Networks Consortia**

List of Neighborhood Networks Consortia

## **Senior Properties**

Listing of Senior Properties with Operational Neighborhood Networks Centers.

## **Online Networking**

Talk with Neighborhood Networks staff and stakeholders via Online Networking.

- **Fact sheets.** Fact sheets are one-page summaries of various topics relevant to the operations of Neighborhood Network centers. Fact sheets that are currently available include an overview of the initiative, telehealth programs, health information, health partnerships, childcare, transportation, seniors, and community improvements at Neighborhood Network centers.
- **News Brief.** (current and past issues): A quarterly newsletter that highlights national achievements for a wide audience including partners and the public.
- **NNewsline.** (current and past issues): A quarterly newsletter that highlights topics of interest to Neighborhood Networks centers and coordinators.